

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on May 26, 2026 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander

ROLL CALL

PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- Thank you, nice to see you all. This is my address for May 26, 2026, the rare Tuesday meeting, so summary of my schedule, and then I'll wait until the other items come up during the Council meeting for my comments during that session. I met with attorneys and executives of the Hammond Sanitary District over an upcoming remediation or a court ordered remediation in regards to litigation involving the Town of Munster and the Hammond Sanitary District. That mediation has since taken place with no meaningful breakthrough in the litigation, so if you have any other questions about it, I can talk to you one on one, off the record. I was interviewed via zoom by Greg Braggs from Braggs in the stands over the potential for the Bears to choose Hammond as the next location for the Bears home stadium. This one, I wasn't able to participate myself, but I do want to thank the Hammond Home Depot, and the Hammond Parks Department as well as the Hammond Area Career Center for working together with the Area Career Center Carpentry students to build Park Benches for our community. It was a really nice effort. A lot of volunteers put in a lot of time, and I want to thank everybody involved in that. I was trying to get over there, that was a really bad day though, but I did want to recognize them. I met with the Hammond Sanitary District Executive team regarding a potential grievance threatened to be filed against the District by Local 150 over contracted out work in the District. It wasn't anything big, and hopefully we can put this away. We have a really good relationship with that Local. Although, I wasn't able to participate myself, I want to thank Anthem Church in Hammond for hosting their annual cookout in the parking lot of Hammond City Hall for all City of Hammond Employees. This is their second year hosting the event, and I want to thank Pastor Sam Hamstra and his flock for choosing us as recipients of their great BBQ skills. I met with the NIPSCO CEO Vince Parisi for an update from NIPSCO's perspective in regards to Hammond's DX Data Center proposal. If anybody wants to ask me about that, I'm more than willing to talk about it. The summary is, NIPSCO has the power for our data center. That's great news, so it's up to DX to close the deal with their customer before the end of this month, but from NIPSCO's perspective, it's a go, which I think is great news for all of us. I want to thank the dozens of Hammond Police Officers who participated in Cop on a Roof at 3 Dunkin' Donut locations across South Hammond. The 3 locations were in the 7300 Block of Indianapolis Boulevard, the 7700 Block of Indy Boulevard, the new Dunkin' down there, and the 7400 Block of Kennedy. All the police officers were raising money for the Special

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- Olympics in Northwest Indiana. The location at the 7300 Block of Indianapolis Boulevard raised the top amount. It's always nice when our officer's give back to the community that they serve. I want to thank everybody involved in that. It's nice to see the cops raising money for a great cause. I had a meeting in City Hall with Councilwoman Venecz over a variety of topics across the city. I appreciate Janet for coming in. I attended the ICSE Convention in Las Vegas, with a contingent of City Employees. We had a booth again this year. We made hundreds of contacts. This is the same convention that we closed the deal with Zaxby's last year, so we're hoping for another deal like that again this year. We did put up the Bear's logo on our booth which is somewhat controversial, but I thought it would attract attention. It definitely attracted attention, so hopefully we'll snag some business off of that. I want to thank everybody that went out there. We had 4 Council Members as well. It's always nice when we have a Council Member there as well. A lot of cases we were talking about 3rd District. I was interviewed via Zoom by Mary Ann Ahern from NBC Channel 5 News over the potential for the Bear's to choose Hammond for the location for the next home stadium. While I was getting interviewed by Mary Ann Ahern, we all know her, we've watched her for years, she's a Hoosier, born and raised in Michigan City, Indiana, so, she's privately rooting for us, even though she's over there in Chicago. Don't give her up. I had a meeting with Father Jeff Burton, from the St. John Bosco Catholic Parrish. We spoke about Gary Diocese properties across the City of Hammond that they Diocese may be interested in granting to the City of Hammond. We wrote a letter to the Bishop less than a year ago, asking the Bishop to keep us in mind if they're going to be getting out of any long term obligations with the land that they own across the city, and we have received a real positive response back from the Bishop, which I thought was positive, and then Father Burton spoke to me in particular about it, so we have some opportunities that may present themselves shortly. I attended the Mohawks organization Annual Memorial Day Parade in North Hammond. Great job, as usual to the Hammond Mohawks and great job to Mother Nature. It was gorgeous yesterday, great crowds, and lots of candy. It just really felt good to see a lot of people out there, a lot of Council people, bands, it was a great day. I just want to thank everybody involved. Today I attended Father Rick Orlinkski's visitation at St. John Bosco Church. Father Rick devoted more than 5 decades of Priesthood to serving the people in Northwest Indiana, but his deepest impact was felt in Hammond, where he became a beloved spiritual leader and community figure. He's the former Pastor for decades of St. John Bosco Church which is where I ran into him. Father Rick also served in St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church, St. Mary Catholic Church, and later St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Downtown Hammond. He's a great guy. It's sad to see people leave that are so big in the community, so I just wanted to recognize Father Rick. That's my report unless you guys have any questions. I'm going to stay because we have business that I want to participate as well today.

COMMON COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING

Councilwoman Alexander- We had 120 applicants this year. We're going to go by, as we talked in our committee meeting, I'm going to go over to Councilman Mark first, since he's in the 1st District, and so on to each respective district. You're going to pull 2 and then an alternate. Then, each At-Large will pull 1 and then we'll pull one alternate from there. We have 15 scholarships of \$1,000 that will be given away. At our next meeting, will be the day that we present them.

COMMON COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING Cont.

WINNERS

DISTRICT 1	JOY KAKISH	HAMMOND CENTRAL
DISTRICT 1	JOSALIN ROSADO	HAMMOND CENTRAL
DISTRICT 2	JA'LISSA CABELLO	HAST
DISTRICT 2	JULIE ORTIZ	HAMMOND CENTRAL
DISTRICT 3	FARRAH PICKETT	HAMMOND CENTRAL
DISTRICT 3	JORI LAWSON	HAMMOND CENTRAL
DISTRICT 4	TRINITY WILLIAMS	HAST
DISTRICT 4	JASMIN SANCHEZ CARRENO	HAMMOND CENTRAL
DISTRICT 5	GERARDO MALDONADO	MORTON
DISTRICT 5	VALERIA PADILLA	MORTON
DISTRICT 6	CAMILA MARTINEZ GALLEGOS	MORTON
DISTRICT 6	ALISON FLORES	MORTON
DISTRICT 5	ARYANNA WILLIAMS	MORTON
DISTRICT 4	CHRISTIAN RODRIGUEZ	HAST
DISTRICT 5	GABRIELA DE LEON VALDERAMOS	HAMMOND CENTRAL

ALTERNATES

DISTRICT 1	EMMA WIESCH	HAST
DISTRICT 2	MELANIE GALLARZO	HAMMOND CENTRAL
DISTRICT 3	ALEXANDER BAUTISTA	HAST
DISTRICT 4	MEAH RODRIGUEZ	HAST
DISTRICT 5	RYAN CAMPBELL	HAST
DISTRICT 6	AIYANA ESPINOZA	BISHOP NOLL INSTITUTE
DISTRICT 3	JUAN MORENO	HAMMOND CENTRAL

Councilwoman Alexander- At our next meeting, which will be June 8th, is when we will recognize these scholarship recipients. They will get a call from the Legacy Organization as well as myself or Councilwoman Venecz to let them know. We thank you guys for sitting through our drawing. Thank you, Councilwoman Venecz.

Council President Venecz- Thank you, and congratulations to all the recipients. Every little bit helps.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the minutes of May 11, 2026 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the claims from May 6, 2026 through May 20, 2026. Claim #3723 through claim #4233, inclusive. In the amount of \$8,944,198.45.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Council President Venecz- All of us did receive this evening, a letter from George Stoya, and I would like to give it to the Clerk to put on file.

Councilman Rakos- I just want to remind everybody that Live in the Ville will be happening again this year, Friday June 12th from 5 p.m.-11 p.m. and Saturday June 13th from 12 p.m.-11 p.m. Right now it's scheduled between 173rd and 169th on Kennedy Avenue. That's where it will be happening this year.

Council President Venecz- You still looking for vendors?

Councilman Rakos- No, they've got vendors, I believe, they're still looking for sponsorships.

Councilman Salinas- This Thursday, May 28th, at 3:30 p.m., in Downtown Hammond, at the old Dan Rabin Plaza, which is 425 Sibley St., our farmed and forged Hammond Market will be kicking off it's Summer events. I know they're going to take place monthly every Thursday, but this Thursday, they begin, they're at the Dan Rabin Plaza, so please come out and check out the different vendors. I bet everyone will have a good time, and find something interesting to them.

Council President Venecz- Are they going to have the classic cars again?

Councilman Salinas- I don't think the classic cars will be out there, I don't think. They are doing the 3 for 1 for those that have the SNAP benefit recipients, 3 for 1 on certain items.

Councilman Rakos- That's Thursday at what time?

Councilman Salinas- 3:30

Council President Venecz- Any other communications? (X3) Communications are closed.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PLANNING COMMITTEE- Councilman Spitale- The Planning Commission met Monday, May 18, 2026 and it was recommended to UESCO, I believe they say, which I hope is right, UESCO Industry property on 9009 Calumet Avenue be (inaudible) manufacturing district destruct to help it and to maintain overhead bridge train manufacturing

Mayor McDermott- Can I summarize real quick for the audience that may not be aware? This is a \$25 million investment over 100 new jobs. This is an industrial building, a 70,000 square foot industrial building for crane manufacturing, distribution, and it's national headquarters. It's going to be located on 7 acres of under utilized parcels at the Southeast Corner of 150th Street and Calumet Avenue. We have a tax abatement as a part of this deal and 100 new jobs of this corridor along Calumet Avenue. This is a great investment with a big company, another Illinois company that moved to our city. I hope the Council supports this, and I appreciate you for letting me speak.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE- Councilman Tyler- The Economic Development Committee will be meeting on Monday, June 8th to discuss Ordinance 26-16. That will be our next meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE- Councilman Woerpel- They did not meet.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD - Councilman Salinas- There were 4 Funding Allocations at last weeks meeting. I'll go through them now:

FUNDING ALLOCATION #323- Downtown Hammond Signage Electronic Message Board Site Plan- American Structurepoint- in the amount of \$4,250.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #324- City Hall Schematic Design- American Structurepoint- in the amount of \$79,780.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #325- 2026 PASER LIDAR Study- First Group Engineering- in the amount of \$57,800.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #326- Sportsplex Traffic Signal- Change Order No. 2- Milestone Contractors- in the amount of \$14,175.96

COMMUNITY AND CRIME WATCH COMMITTEE - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:

East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; Tues. June 16; 6 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center
Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues. June 2; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman Ave.
Jefferson Crime Watch; Wed. May 27; 6 p.m.; Jefferson School
Hessville Crime Watch; Thur. June 18; 6 p.m.; HC3 Community Center
Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur. June 11; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

Council President Venecz- Once again, I urge everyone to attend a community or crime watch meeting. You get a wealth of information, that believe it or not, you just store in your memory bank and when something happens,

*Prepared by
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Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS Cont.

Council President Venecz cont.- you're like, I heard that at the crime watch meeting, I know what to do, so please come out, and hear what the community and the police officers have to say, because community is not just about me, it's about us. Any other committee reports? (X3) Committee reports is now closed.

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Tyler, moves to suspend the rules, to introduce 26R-12

ROLL CALL VOTE (rule suspension)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

26R-12 A Resolution Supporting the Members of United Steelworkers Local 7-1 and urging British Petroleum to end the Lockout at the Whiting Refinery and Resume Good-Faith Bargaining

Councilman Tyler, supported by Salinas, moved for final passage.

Mayor McDermott- This resolution expresses the City of Hammond's support for the approximately 800 members of the United Steelworkers Local 71 who have been locked out of the BP Whiting Refinery since March 19th. The resolution recognizes that many of these workers and their families live, work, worship, volunteer, and raise their families throughout Northwest Indiana including here in Hammond and that the lockout is creating significant financial and emotional hardship for these working families and the communities that depend on them. It also acknowledges concerns raised regarding the operation of a major refinery facility using replacement workers instead of the experienced local workforce that knows the plant and it's safety systems best. Through this resolution, the Hammond City Council and the Administration are urging British Petroleum to end the lockout, return to the bargaining table in good faith, and work towards a fair agreement that protects local jobs, respects workers rights, and promotes the long term safety and stability of the refinery and the surrounding communities.

Councilman Woerpel- I would like to ask Clerk Golec to name me as a co-sponsor on this

Clerk Golec- So noted.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS Cont.

Councilman Tyler- Mayor, I just want to thank you and your administration for bringing this to the Council and planning this. As you know, this is personal for me as the child of 2 steelworkers who actually met in the steel mill, so they've been steelworkers since before I was born. My mom of course is in the audience tonight as a staff representative. This does mean a lot, so I just really wanted to say thank you. I'm a former steelworker, myself, when USW Local 7234 where I spent a couple of years working out of college. I really feel a deep connection to this and my heart goes out to everyone who is impacted by this and hopefully we get you guys back to work. I know it's impacting not only your family, but the entire community. The work that you do is very important. It's your livelihood and it keeps our country moving. Hopefully we can, you know this is only our small part in being a part of this fight, but hopefully this will urge BP to get moving. Thank you.

Mayor McDermott- The Union President, Eric Shultz and I have been communicating throughout and I brought donuts a couple times and this seems like it's more significant, obviously it's the will of the City of Hammond. We support the workers of 71. It's not right what is going on, and as mad as we all are at NIPSCO, NIPSCO started their strike after the men and women went on and were locked out, and NIPSCO resolved that strike in the meantime and the members of 71 are still locked out. It's not right. It's not right, and I appreciate the Council for suspending the rules and voting unanimously because this could have been delayed by 2 weeks if just one person would have stepped up. Councilman Barry, you were the right person to carry this. I appreciate you carrying it and I appreciate all your Council for supporting it, so that we can get it out. I think that time is of the essence. I know that I've read in the paper that BP is going back to the table. I hope that's true and I hope that they get these types of resolutions and realize that they need to finish this and they need to let these people back into work. This isn't right what's going on, so thank you, Councilman Barry.

Councilman Woerpel- As a 47 year member of the AFLCIO, where I worked, we didn't have the right to strike. We basically went in to a cooling off period for 90 days and then management through binding arbitration had up to a year and a half to just give us whatever they wanted. That sucked because we never got more than a percent or two in the contract. I applaud these guys for holding out for what they believe in and for their families.

Mayor McDermott- I think that's an important point. I actually said that to someone the other day. One of the workers, I said, oh it's so bad you guys being on strike, I feel so bad for you. He's like, wrong, Mayor, we've been locked out. That's even worse, when you show up to work one day and everything is locked up and all the management is in there doing the jobs you're supposed to be doing. It's not right. I'm glad you got corrected, and I'm glad I got corrected because these workers were locked out and then management's not even negotiating. They locked them out and they went home. It's not right what is going on. We need to stand behind these workers and do everything we can as a city. Thank you, Councilman.

Councilman Tyler- Under the current suspension of the rules and under discussion for the resolution, I would love it if we could open up the floor for any of the steelworkers or their families to come to the podium and speak.

Eric Shultz, President of Local 71- Thanked the Council for their support of Local 71.

Anthony Higgs- Spoke in favor of the resolution.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS Cont.

Loretta Crockett Tyler- Thanked the Council for their support of Local 71.

Terry Stegall- Spoke in favor of the resolution.

Jim Clochan- Spoke in favor of the resolution.

Council President Venecz added the whole council as sponsors of this resolution.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R12 ADOPTED

Councilman Woerpel, supported by, Councilwoman Alexander, moved to return to regular business.

AYES: ALL

SPECIAL ZONING ACTION ADOPTED UNDER I.C. 36-7

26-17 An Ordinance Reclassifying Certain Lands in the City of Hammond for Zoning Purposes and Amending Ordinance No. 8514 (An Ordinance Establishing a Zoning Plan for the City of Hammond including the Regulations and Maps to Administer the Zoning Plan in Order to Provide for Orderly Growth and Development within the City, all in Accordance with the Comprehensive/Land Use Plan, as Amended) for Property Commonly Known as 5009 Calumet Avenue

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved for final passage.

Mayor McDermott- I want to be careful because I know we've messed this step up before. I know we're not supposed to argue it, but I'll just reiterate again, \$25 million investment, 100 new jobs, 70,000 square foot industrial building for crane manufacturing, distribution, as well as the national headquarters for UESCO, located on 7 acres of under utilized parcels that, I went back as far as my mind could stretch, and I don't remember there being anything on this site other than a city building that was used by Hammond Sanitary District. I think the last time this building was used was in the early 1900's. This land was profitable, meaning tax paying land in the City of Hammond. We do have a 10 year tax abatement that we've agreed upon as the incentive package for moving this business into Hammond. It's great in my opinion to bring 100 new jobs to this corridor on land that's really never generated jobs for close to a century, if not longer. I hope the Council considers this strongly. I think it's a great move for our city.

Councilman Salinas- To the Mayor's point, I want to add that these 100 jobs are high quality jobs with great benefits that will be hired locally. To the point that was made maybe during our last meeting, during public expression, this is a 4th generation family owned company, relocating their business from Illinois where it's been for over 100 years and they're making a significant investment and decision to call Hammond their new long term home for generations to come. So please everyone, consider this. Thank you.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

SPECIAL ZONING ACTION ADOPTED UNDER I.C. 36-7 Cont.

Councilman Woerpel- To reiterate what Councilman Salinas is saying, 47 years ago I started at the Post Office, and one of the first routes I delivered, was that place. There wasn't a business there then 47 years ago, and to reiterate what Councilman Salinas said, I know the people in public expression like to tell us we don't know what we're doing, but a property that's been vacant for 47 years, and somebody wants to buy it, and redevelop it, I'm 100 % for it, no matter what it takes to get them here.

Mayor McDermott- One more point, this company stuck with us by the way, we had another deal that fell apart. We made a decision that didn't go UESCO's way and they could have easily walked, and they stuck with the City of Hammond. I do want to point that out, that they could have walked months ago when we made the deal with Riverside Christian, and they didn't. They stuck with us through thick and thin and I did want to point that out to the Council. They're obviously committed to our city.

Councilman Woerpel- One thing I forgot, one of the things I heard about this property is there were tunnels there so Al Capone can move back and forth from Calumet City to Hammond when it was a distillery, and I'm here to tell you there's no such tunnels underneath that property.

Council President Venecz- There were tunnels all around, but maybe not there. Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9710 APPROVED

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Tom Kazmierczak- Says handicap entrances need more signage at the Civic Center.

Barbara Hargrove- Shared an illustration/description of the new Veteran's Memorial Parkway.

Terry Stegall- Shared a brochure/info regarding a meeting about Green Steel.

George Stoya- Says Dairy Belle is exploiting schools and will cause traffic jams along with the laundry mat; Angry that the city refuses to let the camera view the faces of public expression speakers during the meeting.

Mary Schoons- Thinks property taxes are high because of tax abatements; Opposed to Governor's Parkway

Ken Rosek- Opposed to Governor's Parkway

Anthony Higgs- Willing to help with the Veteran's Memorial Parkway; Would like Hammond Day to come back; MLK Park has Barry Tyler's name on the plaque instead of his.

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

2026 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	12	26	9	23	9	23	13	27	11	26							
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P							
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Alfonso Salinas III	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG							

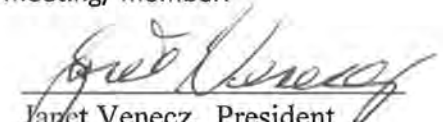
E=ELECTRONIC

P=PHYSICALLY

PRESENT

A=ABSENT

If the member qualifies for an exemption from the "Consecutive - 50" requirements, draw a circle around the E for that meeting/ member.


Janet Venecz, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:


Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 7:09 p.m.
mg

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk